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CAW Urges Full and Thorough Investigation into Attack on Taxi Driver

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(Ottawa) In response to the attack by off-duty police officer on taxi driver and CAW Local 1688 member Sami Aldoboni, CAW President Ken Lewenza is urging a full and thorough investigation into the May 11 incident.

“We expect a comprehensive investigation into this incident. Equally disturbing was the response of police officers who arrived on the scene of the attack,” said Lewenza. “This must also be fully investigated so that all citizens can be assured fair treatment at the hands of the law officials.”

Today, Ottawa chief of police Vern White met with the airport taxi drivers, along with union officials, to assure the drivers that the police force understands their anger about the incident and that it would be fully investigated. CAW national representative Mohamad Alsadi met with White yesterday where the union was reassured that the Ottawa police would be fully transparent in their role in the investigation.

“By meeting with the drivers, the chief of police has demonstrated that the matter is being taken very seriously and on behalf of our members who drive airport taxis and those in the city, we certainly appreciate that,” said Lewenza.

The investigation has since been passed along to Ontario’s Special Investigations Unit, a civilian body charged with investigating incidents involving police and civilians. White also told the union that the Ottawa police would carry out its own investigation into the conduct of the officers following the completion of the SIU investigation.

Lewenza warned that the union will monitor the progress of the SIU investigation and expects it to be completed in a timely manner. “The CAW will continue to be vigilant against any incidents of racism or attacks on workers,” said Lewenza.

Lewenza also voiced concern about the quick response of the police union that the off-duty officer was swarmed by taxi drivers, a claim that was unsubstantiated by eye-witnesses.

In recent years, the city of Ottawa has made an effort to hire police officers that are representative of the city’s diverse population and while this practice is encouraging, it must be increased to ensure people of colour are well represented on the force and are not ever in the situation of being victimized, said Lewenza.

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